

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

September 23, 2000, saw the seventh annual celebration of National Public Lands Day (NPLD), the nation's premier workday on behalf of America's public lands. The nationwide event was coordinated by the nonprofit, D.C.-based National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF), with participation by eight Federal land management agencies, the Environmental Protection Agency, private partner groups, and local and national sponsors, including Toyota USA.

In 2000, the BLM hosted an extraordinary variety of work and educational activities at a record-breaking 50 sites from Florida to Alaska, enlisting the aid of more than 6,000 volunteers of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels. At Virginia's Pohick Bay Regional Park, for example, volunteers built an erosion-control retaining wall and rerouted two sections of trail. At Cochiti Lake in New Mexico, a lakeshore cleanup project took center stage for the day. And at Badger Springs, the gateway to Arizona's Agua Fria National Monument, volunteers collected 60–75 large bags of trash and an assortment of oversized garbage, with prizes awarded for the most “interesting” items collected.

At the Wedge Overlook in Utah, volunteers—including then-BLM Director Tom Fry—laid concrete for a ramp accessible to persons with disabilities, built 700 feet of



The Jupiter Inlet Natural Area in Florida welcomed nearly 100 volunteers on National Public Lands Day. These students spent much of the day removing exotic plant species from the tract.

buck and rail fence, and removed old tires from the Sid's Mountain Wilderness Study Area. “National Public Lands Day is a terrific opportunity for Americans to experience firsthand their public lands and give something back to their country,” Fry said. “As the event grows each year, more and more people are becoming involved in public land stewardship. We at the Department of the Interior feel that it is extremely important to restore and protect these unique open spaces in the face of growing development. National Public Lands Day is an occasion to celebrate public lands and the open spaces they guarantee.”

At other BLM locations around the nation, NPLD participants improved wildlife habitat, stabilized stream channels, painted, trimmed, revegetated, scrubbed, weeded,

and otherwise pampered the irreplaceable cultural and natural resources on BLM's public lands.

All told, this year 50,000 NPLD volunteers performed work with a value of \$8 million at more than 270 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The value of

this event extends far beyond what is accomplished on this one day, however. By exposing Americans to the spectacular resources on the public lands and affording them the opportunity to contribute their labor, NPLD nurtures a sense of stewardship and conservation and encourages public lands volunteerism during the rest of the year.



National Public Lands Day near Dillon, Montana, involved plenty of work and some living history, too. At the Beaverhead River Land Acquisition/Pipe Organ site, local historian Steve Morehouse talked to Scout volunteers about Lewis and Clark, who camped there in 1805.